INSTRUCTION DIVISION

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THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

The Official Journal of the Association of Assistant Librarians

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THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE
ASSOCIATION OF ASSISTANT LIBRARIANS
(*Section of the Library Association*)

Vol. XXXIX NOVEMBER—DECEMBER, 1946 No. 6

HON. EDITOR : S. C. HOLLIDAY Kensington Public Libraries

Council Notes

THE fourth Council Meeting of the 51st session was held at Chaucer House on September 18th, the President (J. T. Gillett, Esq.) in the chair.

Mr. H. C. Twaits was elected Hon. Librarian, and co-opted to the Council, A warm welcome was extended to Mr. S. W. Martin on his return from H.M. Forces. and it was resolved that Mr. and Mrs. Martin should act as joint Hon. Education Secretaries and be co-opted to the Council.

Members' reactions to the proposed alterations to Divisional areas, as scheduled in the July-August *Assistant* were considered. Approval of the proposed new Division was noted, and steps are now being taken with a view to its early establishment. From both Oxford and Cambridge came requests to be included in the Greater London Division, but the Council re-affirmed its policy of not further extending this Division, and suggested that the members in the towns under consideration would better serve the Association through the smaller Divisions. It was agreed that Cambridge should be included in the Eastern Division, not the East Midland Division as previously proposed.

Good progress with the preparation of the new edition of *Sequel stories* was reported to the Press and Publications Committee, and it was resolved that this edition shall be entitled *Sequel stories—incorporating Aldred's Sequel stories.* This Committee also approved the principle of preparing a pamphlet setting out the aims and achievements of the Association, and the Council set up a small Sub-Committee to draft the pamphlet.

The Education Committee reviewed the position regarding Tutors for the forthcoming November Courses, and estimate that about 600 applications may be accepted.

A reference from the Library Association's Membership Committee concerning Transitional members of the A.A.L. was considered by the Finance and General Purposes Committee, and it was resolved to take further steps to encourage Transitional members to take full L.A. membership.

Mr. H. W. Marr, Chairman of the Council during the current year, was nominated as President for 1947 ; and the Council nominated the following Officers of the Association for the coming year :—

Hon. Secretary : E. Cave. Hon. Treasurer : E. Wisker. Hon. Editor : S. C. Holliday.

Divisional Notes and News

DIVISIONAL Hon. Secretaries are requested kindly to render reports of meetings as soon as possible after their occurrence. It is believed that the activities of several Divisions are not being made known to the Assistant ; *and while it must be at least disheartening to members addressing meetings to find their papers unrecorded, those members who do not attend meetings are led to the belief that no Divisional activities are taking place.*

Devon and Cornwall.—A Meeting of the Devon and Cornwall Division was held at the Town Hall, Dawlish, on Tuesday, 18th June, with Miss S. C. Cooker, Vice-Chairman in the chair. A welcome was extended to members returned from service with H. M. Forces. Following a library " Quiz," which caused some amusement, members visited the Dawlish branch of Devon County Library where they were welcomed by the Branch Librarian, Miss E. E. Ferris. The meeting concluded with refreshments at a local cafe.

Greater London.—The Greater London Division is holding monthly informal meetings at Chaucer House on the second Thursday of each month, at 6.30 p.m. The meetings are held in the Members' Room and refreshments are served during the evening. The Division has been fortunate in securing some stimulating speakers. On 13th June, Mr. T. E. Callander opened the discussion on " Mechanization in libraries " and provided us with some revolutionary ideas on the use of punched cards for stock and borrowers records as well as much to argue about. On 11th July, Mr. J. H. Pafford opened the discussion on the " National library and its service." Mr. Pafford's suggestions for widening the scope of the British Museum were welcomed by those present and the only cause for regret was that no one from the staff of the British Museum was present to take up the challenge.

The Examination Brains Trust held on Sunday, 16th June, proved as stimulating as the previous ones.

On the 24th July, the Division was addressed by Mr. E. J. Carter, the Counsellor for Libraries and Museums to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. Mr. Carter spoke of the place of libraries in culture and of some of the things UNESCO hopes to do. These include a survey of the present state of libraries throughout the world and of the losses and gaps occasioned by the war, the encouragement and co-ordination of bibliographical work, research into the availability of books, and methods of reproduction ; the setting up of a world bibliographical and library centre to co-ordinate the work of the National Libraries of each country and of an international publications clearing house to collect and distribute books.

Future meetings :—

14*th November*—" The special library point of view."
12*th December*—" What's wrong with librarianship as a profession."
9*th January*—"1d. to pay : a discussion on library rules."
13*th February*—" Women in the library profession."
13*th March*—A Library Quiz.

Further details will be announced later. Subjects for subsequent meetings and offers to speak at them are invited.

Midland.—A joint meeting of the Midland Division and the Birmingham and District Branch of the Library Association was held at West Bromwich on June 27th.

The occasion was a memorable one in the history of the West Bromwich Public Library, for it marked the culmination of a long and patient endeavour to decorate with mural paintings the Carnegie Library opened in 1907. Mr. H. M. Cashmore, F.L.A., City Librarian of Birmingham and President of the Library Association unveiled the six panels which complete the scheme of decoration begun in 1909. These depict four scenes from Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* by Miss Patricia Arnett, a young student, formerly of the West Bromwich School of Art and now of the Slade School, and two of the Borough's historic buildings by Mr. H. R. Hosking, A.R.C.A., and Mr. J. James, the Principal and a member of the staff of the West Bromwich Art School. Before adjourning to the Town Hall, where tea was kindly provided by the Chairman and members of the West Bromwich Public Libraries Committee, members were presented with souvenir booklets containing photographs of the Library and the mural decorations.

At the meeting which followed, the chair was taken by Mr. F. J. Patrick, F.L.A., Deputy City Librarian of Birmingham. Papers were read by Messrs. W. Pearson, A.L.A., and C. J. Dolman, F.L.A., of the Birmingham Public Libraries on the " Return to duty : a librarian's impressions at home and abroad, 1939-1946."

A vote of thanks to the speakers for the enthusiasm which their papers had aroused, was proposed by Mr. V. H. Woods, A.L.A., Chief Assistant of Birmingham, and seconded by Miss K. R. Birch, of Worcester County.

Mr. E. P. Pritchard, F.L.A., Chairman of the Midland Division proposed a vote of thanks for their kind hospitality to the Chairman and members of the West Bromwich Public Libraries Committee : this was seconded by Miss Jean Paterson, F.L.A., Secretary of the Joint Committee.

North-Eastern.—The first joint meeting of the North-Eastern Division and the Northern Branch of the Library Association was held on July 17th, 1946, at the Public Library, Carlisle, under the Chairmanship of Mr. E. Austin Hinton, B.A., F.L.A. (City Librarian, Newcastle-upon-Tyne).

Sixty members attended, and in the afternoon were conducted round the Carlisle Cathedral.

The party reassembled at the Public Library for tea at the kind invitation of the staffs of the Carlisle Public Library and the Cumberland County Library, to whom a vote of thanks was moved by Miss M. Wright (Whitley Bay), and seconded by Mr. E. F. Ferry (Gateshead).

After a short business meeting, Miss D. M. Lattin (Cumberland County Library) read an able and provocative paper entitled " Educating readers."

The vigorous discussion which followed showed that members had taken a lively interest in the paper, and a vote of thanks to Miss Lattin was proposed by Mr. J. Smeaton (Newcastle).

Nominations are invited for the following Officers and Committee for 1947 :— Hon. Secretary ; Hon. Treasurer ; Hon. Education Secretary ; Hon. Membership Secretary ; Nine Committee Members.

Nominations must be made on the prescribed form by two or more members of the Division, and submitted to the Divisional Hon. Secretary, Miss Winifred Darkin, King's College, Newcastle-on-Tyne, 1, by November 15th, 1946.

North-Western.—Eighty members of the Liverpool and District Branch met at Warrington Municipal Library on Thursday, May 23rd, by kind invitation of the Mayor of Warrington. Dr. Chian-Pi-Hsu attended as a guest of the Branch Committee.

The Library Assistant

After refreshments and an inspection of the Library, the meeting assembled in the Art Gallery and were welcomed by the Deputy Chairman of the Warrington Libraries Committee, Councillor A. Hodgkinson. Four papers were read by members recently demobilised from the Services: (1) "Random remarks on things naval and bibliographical," by Mr. S. White (ex-Navy) of Liverpool; (2) "Some impressions of India," by Mr. E. W. Moxey (ex-Army) of Wallasey; (3) "Brains in the Attery: the cultural activities of the A.T.S.," by Miss E. M. A. MacDonald (ex-A.T.S.) of Liverpool; and (4) "Brief encounters: the road back from Bomber Command to 'Civvy Street,'" by Mr. J. C. Harrison (ex-R.A.F.) of Liverpool. As Miss MacDonald was unable to be present, her paper was read by Miss J. D. Pickering.

The meeting concluded after a vote of thanks, proposed by Mr. A. R. Hardman (of Liverpool) to the Mayor, the Warrington Libraries Committee, Councillor Hodgkinson, the speakers, and to Mr. G. A. Carter (Acting Librarian of Warrington), had been seconded by Miss J. Cliffe (of Wallasey) and carried unanimously.

On Thursday, July 18th, fifty-seven members of the Branch enjoyed an evening coach tour, which was organised by the Branch Committee instead of a formal meeting.

Valuations

M. L. Jackson

Dear R.—

When your letter came to me through the channels of "Valuations," I realised that this is a feature with some use, after all. It was good to hear that you are a civilian again, though temporarily out of the swim, whatever or whoever the swim is in librarianship.

I was surrounded by various reports and booklists, making the usual scattered and frantic notes for "Valuations," but I have swept them aside while I make some attempt at satisfying your request for news of the state of libraries and librarians in general. You will know the general outline of the story by now; unless you are unusually fortunate, it is "few books, few trained staff, and too much to do."

Still, the reports around me are mainly cheerful; a sort of stock-taking after the havoc of the last seven years, when the best is yet to be, or the worst is over—we hope. There are grim stories like Bermondsey's, "one of the most heavily and consistently bombed areas in the British Isles," telling of buildings shattered and stock lost; and yet, Phoenix-like, rise plans for new buildings, temporary accommodation, and hopes for books and staff to be. After calm, detached accounts of buildings continually blasted, of Junior and Reference Libraries commandeered by other local government departments, of the stock of the National Central Library reduced by enemy action from 176,961 to 72, 612, it is amusing to read in the report from the Brentwood Branch of the Essex County Library, "this has been a difficult year for libraries all over the country, and especially for Brentwood." Yet, even this anguished beginning has the ending, "We can surely look forward to a bright and successful year." (Surely, if only we could get some re-binding back!)

As long as houses and schools have first priority, we must wait for our new library buildings, though plans are going forward for temporary ones, as for the temporary

Central Library at Coventry. The new Bracebridge Branch at Lincoln is a prefabricated structure with a brick annexe. This, the only new Branch library to be built since the war began, accommodates 5,000 books, has glazed French doors at the back, polished oak furnishings, wood-block floors, tiled entrance hall with illuminated wall display cases, and cost £2,000 plus £370 for fittings. Many library buildings are drab for want of paint and distemper ; many more are drab because they will never be otherwise, cluttered up as they are by the cases of stuffed birds and oddments, archaeological, historical, botanical and abominable which go to make up a local museum. Not that I'm " again " museums, but I like them as well-organised as the privately-run one at Salisbury, or containing a good survey of an area, as in some of the county towns.

Perhaps, sometime, some of the ugly and forbidding library buildings will be abandoned, even though still as solid as at the time of building. Perhaps others, unfortunately placed, will find happier surroundings, and the first-floor library I know of rescued from the commingling effluvia from the fish mart and public convenience which stand below.

Book supply is improving slightly, but still important books go out of print immediately after publication. A hawk-like eye must range bookshops for reprints which occasionally emerge unheralded from publishers and disappear quickly. There's a lot of trash about, you will have noticed, and quite a string of adequate, competent, but chilling novels, slim volumes over which our reader's eye quickly passes in vain search for things he has loved and lost. Meanwhile, the library stock grows shabbier and more barren. Worn copies of important fiction must be kept in reserve until they can be replaced, but who has adequate store-room for this? Rochester seems to have cause for self-satisfaction : " Owing to shrewd purchase " (I would call it manna from Heaven) " of 4,000 fiction in 1940 . . . replacements of almost all the standard authors have been available throughout the year." Beddington and Wallington has a comforting and understanding public : " irritation is inevitable, though appreciation of our concern and our inability to remedy the position is always expressed when explanation is made." Always? Come, now, can there be an area without that cross-to-bear who can always tell of the book shop housing the new book which has not yet come your way, or who is affronted to find that 25 other ratepayers have reserved the book before him.

And the reader?—well, he's reading more than he did in 1939-42, and keeps clamouring for the sort of book which caused no clamour in 1939 and before, and that sort of book was the first casualty in out-of-prints. What is he reading?—West Loughton report says " the fiction issues speak for themselves—the majority of people read for pleasure." Well, there are many reading for pleasure among the non-fiction shelves. The reader doesn't seem to want so much technical literature as he did in wartime, and would as soon take a book on hardy perennials as on war-time experiences. He wants to know more about countries and conditions and what is happening nationally and internationally ; much was read on the new Education Bill and new Health schemes. Interior decorating, slate-your-own-roof, do-your-own-plastering are, of necessity, popular subjects. Music and literature, religion and popular science and philosophy are read more these days.

The reader wants more information about books and more personal help, especially now that book reviews grow more obscure and less about the books than ever. He gets very little information from the general run of library booklists and bulletins, so that they defeat what should be their main purpose—that of elucidating titles and describing the theme or aim of books. Some subject lists need little more than an indication of

how advanced a textbook is, or whether a new edition is substantially a revision of the old, and this information is given in the lists on Building and Housing from Cardiff and Swindon. The quarterly booklist from Derbyshire has good annotations with asterisks marking books also suitable for young readers ; that's a very helpful feature. Also from Derbyshire comes a very attractively produced select list of books about the County in the Derbyshire County Library stock. What particularly impresses me is the idea of distributing this list freely to " works canteens of the many large industrial undertakings throughout the county, and to many of the places where we feel the work of the library needs to be brought to the notice of members of the public."

Southport bulletin contains a very good article by Alan Storey on modern writers, recommending books like Warner's *Aerodrome*, Waugh's *Brideshead revisited*, Eliot's *Four quarters*, Sitwell's *Left hand, right hand*, Alun Lewis's poetry, and discussing them, instead of following the usual practice in booklists of interring them decently among the hotch-potch of titles. Newark's *Good company* has friendly notes, though I thought Moore's *Portrait of Elmbury* was of Tewkesbury and not of an " imaginary country town." Gateshead puts Gingold's *World is square* in biography without a warning to the straight-biography addict, or is the title enough ? Similarly Rochester's amiable chat on books says that " there is an aurora (*sic*) of glamour about the early days of the Russian ballet, and this has been chosen as the background for *Six curtains for Strogonova*." So few librarians give their readers a break and point out to them a gay frolic or a good skit. There's a good quarterly list from the University of Birmingham Extra-Mural Library with plenty of information for the reader, who is warned that in a chapter on modern art, Bodkin " denounces it all indiscriminately." Otherwise, the more obvious books seem to get the blurbs, while others which could be explained or recommended are left alone. Why, do you think, is it that we needs must describe the familiar when we see it ? For instance, in Scarborough's booklist, the titles listed under " D Day to V Day " have each the record of whether the experiences were in the Western Desert or elsewhere, while *Another world than this* might never be a new and unusual anthology, or even collected by Nicolson as well as Sackville-West. Edmonton gets down to fiction annotating, ignoring the possible complexities of *Final score*, *Mine own executioner*, *County affairs*, *Three men in new suits*, and concentrating on the comfy ones like *Isabel Clarke*, " the story of English life in an old country house," and Zane Grey's *Wilderness trek*, " a cowboy story set in the cattle country of Australia."

Children ?—well, they read more than ever, in the usual ebbs and flows, and the junior books fall apart more than they ever did and need rebinding in no time. The only booklist of children's books in the collection around me is from Hornsey—*Children's books of* 1945 ; *an exhibition and display, April 8th-13th.* This is a well-duplicated selection with annotations mainly from the *Junior Bookshelf*, *New Statesman* and *Times*. In *Reading in Toronto* I noticed a deploring of " the rising tide of comics, another particularly ominous foe to the mental development of boys and girls." The article goes on, " The real crime that too many movies and too many radio programmes commit against children is the crime against their minds, the dulling of their senses, the laziness of intellect they engender." You will see that the Library Association have recommended the designation of the post of " Librarian-in-charge of work with young people " for library areas. This is a good move, for more should be done for the young people in an area than occasional school-leavers' visits or the telling of a few fairy stories at Christmas.

You may also have heard some of the backwash of the controversy on whether librarians are just librarians, or whether they should go forth to the organizing of general

cultural activities. From these reports, it is obvious that some libraries are the local points for wider educational gatherings, exhibitions, concerts and discussions. The Hanwell Discussion Group at Ealing had offshoots in the Hanwell Players and the Hanwell Arts Club. Swindon Library is the founder and meeting place for the Gramophone Society, the Art Discussion Group, Literary and Debating Society, Play Reading Group, Ballet Club, etc. The Brighton Art Gallery (with the Arts Council) is showing an exhibition "English conversation piece of the eighteenth century." At Leicester, lectures on modern literature are given by a Lecturer of Vaughan College who evaluates six or so outstanding books published during the month. At Islington, the Gramophone Club, Literary and Debating Society, and Antiquarian and Record Society all meet at the library.

You will be glad to know that the Library Association is considering the national organization of book resources for research. The aims for this national scheme are that there should be for every subject or group of subjects at least two collections as complete as possible; that there should be one from which books are not lent—the British Museum; and that there should be fuller knowledge of the collections. A national co-operative book selection in periodicals is recommended, and the publication for some subjects of specialist union catalogues. It is proposed that "in any such scheme the regional reference library, as well as enlarging its own stock to meet new responsibilities, should act as the centre of a co-ordinated regional reference system in which all suitable libraries are invited to co-operate."

The British Library of Political and Economic Science seems to have some invaluable records for the student. Soon the material will be ready which was collected by the Sidney Webbs for their history of English Local Government. It will amount to 350 volumes and will soon be available to research workers for the first time.

The National Central Library has been very busy; the issues in 1944-45 were 163,000 against 145,000 in the last pre-war year. About 6,660 educational books were supplied to the Forces.

That, for what it is worth, is a sketchy re-introduction to the library world. I should add that we are all older by more than seven years, and we don't discuss books or bombs, but salary scales.

Best wishes for a painless settle-in, and why not write a "Revaluations" for us?

Yours,

M.L.J.

Studies in Modern Librarianship

Leonard J. Shaw

THE Summer Vacation Course of the University College School of Librarianship, held in London during July 8-12 was unquestionably a resounding success. Grateful thanks are due to the Director—Mr. Irwin—who so arranged the Course and to the other lecturers for their efforts on our behalf. Mr. Irwin and Miss Taylor were unfailingly helpful in arranging, with speed and success, special visits by parties of students to various libraries and industrial undertakings.

The uniformly excellent lectures and the instructive visits will doubtless pay valuable dividends in the future; yet the opportunity of meeting professional colleagues from

all parts of Great Britain and of exchanging ideas, reminiscences and general impressions was no less valuable, particularly in view of the involuntary loss of such contacts during the war years.

The President of the Library Association, Mr. Cashmore, in his inaugural address stressed the extreme interest of the Library Association in the work of the School of Librarianship. He spoke appreciatively of its fine record and paid tribute to the efficiency and enthusiasm of its Director. He adjured librarians to be proud of their calling and to grasp eagerly the many opportunities, constantly presented, to help the increasingly large sections of the community turning to their public libraries for advice and assistance. Finally he mentioned the inherent friendliness of librarians, of all nations and creeds, and hoped that at the end of our careers we should be able to look back—as he would—upon a happy and fruitful professional life.

The first lecture, "Towards a national library service," was given by Mr. Irwin. He spoke again later in the Course on "The place of county libraries in the national service": since these two papers were complementary they may conveniently be reported together. Mr. Irwin felt that much that was notable in British librarianship had emerged from the war years and hoped that a really exhaustive history of libraries and the Library Association during this period would be written. He praised the Library Association and the profession for making far-sighted plans for professional education amid the turmoil of war; he considered the McColvin Report not only a historic document of the first importance, but also the most significant contribution to British librarianship since the Departmental Committee Report of 1927. He thought Mr. McColvin had presented a frank and telling—if sometimes horrifying—picture of British libraries. Mr. Irwin spoke of the Report at some length, as well as of the Library Association proposals, which he regarded as a great step forward in the re-organization of our Profession. He though it quite obvious that a national library service was the dominant concept of both the McColvin Report and the L.A. Proposals. He stressed that a national library service had nothing whatsoever to do with nationalisation. His personal opinion was that the re-organization of the public library service was not only possible but even likely, and he strongly advocated that library and education areas should be co-terminous.

Mr. Irwin then discussed the questions of new library areas or re-adjustments of the set-up of existing local authorities. He suggested that the County Council and the County Borough Council would emerge as the probable local government pattern to which library—and other—services would conform. He reviewed the history and present position of county libraries, with especial reference to their vastly increased functions and responsibilities under the set-up he envisaged. He thought that two basic truths emerged from the experience of the past: firstly, that it is the duty of a County Library authority to provide a library service, comparable in quality to that offered in the larger areas, in every single part of the county; secondly, that a county library service cannot and should not be cheap and that its cost should be at least as high as that of a municipal library service.

Mr. Irwin dealt with the degree of centralization he considered desirable: general administration of the system, senior appointments, planning, book and equipment purchasing, cataloguing and classification, bookstore and distribution of supplies. Obviously, he said, the entire cost of a county library service should be borne by a flat rate covering the whole county. Finally, he suggested that county libraries would be well advised to prepare for the large and vital changes in function that might come in the near future.

Miss Taylor in her two lectures discussed recent developments in cataloguing and classification. She first dealt evaluatively with the new edition of the Anglo-American Code—the fullest cataloguing code ever issued—and its implications for librarians. Then followed a discussion on the amount of bibliographical detail needed in cataloguing (the " bibliographical versus pragmatic " theory), the future of card catalogues (now tending to overwhelm), dealing with cataloguing arrears and, finally, the cataloguing of material other than books, especially as it affects special libraries.

In her classification lecture, Miss Taylor began with a summary of existing book classification schemes, concentrating mainly on Bliss and Ranganathan, and a review of classification literature since 1930. She discussed the " necessity " of classification (sometimes disputed) and thought that although it had defects, no practical alternative had yet appeared. She spoke of the degree of permanence of any classification scheme and the question of the librarian's dilemma when confronted with new editions of the classification scheme in use in his library. After outlining the alternative courses of action possible in dealing with this very real problem, Miss Taylor reviewed the increasing problems of " functional " classification and finally gave a resumé of unorthodox classification schemes and canons of more recent years.

Mr. Francis, of the British Museum, qualifying his original subject (" The national libraries in recent years ") proferred some new ideas in current national library development in England, particularly in the British Museum Library. He outlined the supreme importance of our national libraries and enlarged on their practical functions, examining these functions with especial reference to the B.M. Library and comparing them with the Library of Congress. Mr. Francis spoke of the important place of the national libraries in a national library service, emphasising the urgent need of close co-operation and the eminent desirability of centralized cataloguing, classification and book purchase. The uses of microfilms were then examined, followed by a survey of the Museum Library catalogue and its upkeep. Finally, possible developments in the activities of our great national library were discussed, among them being centralized cataloguing, the loaning of duplicate copies and the compilation of reading lists and bibliographies.

Mr. Fullman, of the British Non-Ferrous Metals Research Association, in his paper on " The present position of special libraries in Great Britain " set the subject against a historical background. He spoke of the remarkable growth of special libraries and the changed attitude both of the people running these collections and the people using them. He discussed the significant change in various branches of industry and technology from individual research to the large-scale planned investigation so widely and profitably used to-day. The particular functions and methods of special libraries and information bureaux were then examined. The foundation of ASLIB in 1924, went on Mr. Fullman, was a stepping-stone in the history of special libraries ; the final seal of imperative need of such libraries, however, was set by the recent war when they were found indispensable even by those people who had hitherto scorned them. After touching briefly on co-operation with other libraries of all types, he concluded with some cogent observations on the photographic reproduction of literature and other informative material.

Mr. Pafford in his lecture on " University libraries in Great Britain " opened with a general survey of university libraries : number, size, work, government, administration, co-operation. He then considered the library movement in Great Britain as a whole, examining its many-sided duties and operations and discussing how best the university libraries could fit into a national scheme. Mr. Pafford discussed at some length the Bodleian Library and the Cambridge University Library, stressing their existing national

character inasmuch as they serve not only their own universities but the community at large. He emphasized that nearly every college has some sort of service to the general public and never refuses help to bona fide students or readers : an aspect of their work unknown to many.

In the last lecture of the Course, Mr. Sayers spoke on " Developments in municipal library practice." He suggested that there had been no radical developments in the last six or seven years, although the library profession was making great strides just before the war. He spoke feelingly of the many extra tasks thrust upon librarians during the war to the consequent neglect of important library work and activities. In spite of this however, he thought that the library service had demonstrated its virility and versatility, despite great difficulties and dangers.

Mr. Sayers thought that we should speedily rid ourselves of the shibboleth of the " beautiful " library building built more or less for eternity. Put in its place, he suggested, a more functional building of a less permanent character which could be replaced to suit new ideas and new generations. He visualized a " big room," divided not by walls but by movable furniture and bookcases thus giving great mobility. He next discussed the problem of the book itself and the present difficulty of keeping book stocks up to a desirable standard, developing this theme into a general discussion on increased costs.

Finally, Mr. Sayers dealt with centralized cataloguing and classification which, he declared, would free individual librarians to exploit their book stocks and thus give an enhanced personal service to readers.

Enjoyable visits were made during the Course to the British Museum Library, the University of London Library, The National Central Library, Hendon and Croydon public libraries, the London School of Economics Library, and Recordak Limited.

Disintegration

Bernard I. Palmer

SINCE Mr. Wyndham Hulme's tentative essays in vols. 13 and 14 of *The Library Association Record*, there has been no serious attempt to examine critically the philosophic basis of bibliographic classification. Bliss and Ranganathan, the two most recent writers in this field, both tend to accept the basis laid down early this century by Sayers. The only writer of note to oppose the idea of exact scientific classification, Miss G. O. Kelly, confined herself to the practical aspects of the subject.

The advent of a new book[1]; which avowedly concerns itself with the philosophy of classification is an occasion of great interest to those concerned with the finer points of classification, and of apprehension to those facing the hurdles of professional qualification. Let me hasten to reassure these last : this book is too advanced in conception to concern candidates for Registration. It is a book for the slow consumption and slower assimilation of the maturer mind.

1. Broadfield, A. *The philosophy of classification.* Grafton. 1946. 12*s.*6*d.*

Mr. Broadfield has set himself the task of examining all the assumptions which are basic to our present philosophy of classification. He tries them all, and, seemingly, finds them all wanting. The five chapters of his work deal with five concepts fundamental to the idea of scholarly classification: Likeness, Things and their kinds, Evolution, Consensus and Purpose. In these there is enough ammunition to enable the Wyndham Hulme school to make a good showing against the Scholarly school. Always providing its proponents can understand the somewhat difficult language in which Mr. Broadfield's arguments are phrased.

He claims that we think too facilely in terms of likeness and unlikeness, overloading their meaning to achieve our ends. We must go deeper than this, he says, for they are only signposts to possible deeper relations. When two things are like, something in them must be the same. He points out that likeness is often only a matter of quantity, and quantities are not susceptible to classification. Who can say where " a few " becomes " several," and " several " " a lot "? Differences based on quantities often appear to us as qualities (e.g., differences in the frequency of light waves are perceived as colours), and as classification concerns itself with qualities, there is room here for error.

On *differens*, Mr. Broadfield says that the means of dividing which utilizes differentiæ does NOT yield the specific thing; but the species which makes the thing specific. There is subtle argument in this book of which this is a very simple example. On the scientists' choice of characteristics he remarks that classification proceeds for the most part in accordance with characters selected as relevant to a particular scientific purpose, not as representative of the being of the thing for all purposes. That seems to dispose of the idea of the " natural " classification.

The book is full of disturbing statements thrown off at random. There is the claim, for instance, that the use of negative collective division, such as *Other European languages*, results in exhaustive classification only so far as part of its contents is left nondescript. Such statements crop up on every other page; but they have no cumulative effect other than bewilderment. One is left with the feeling that all classification is a purely subjective experience: a worrying thought for those of us concerned in the training of classifiers. One is thrown back to the " intuitive perception " which Ranganathan has tried to rationalize in his *Fundamentals and Procedure*.

Unhappily, the book loses a great deal of its potential power owing to its formlessness. It is not enough to discuss five fundamental ideas at some length, and leave each one when interest wanes. Not only each chapter, but the whole book should lead somewhere. In fact, neither the individual chapters nor the book seem to end: they just cease to go on.

Mr. Broadfield is to be congratulated upon his wide reading, and deep cogitation; but his prefatorial statement that he " dare not claim that the matters at issue are treated clearly, since clear treatment depends upon clear vision, and cannot be the consequence of a vision all too dim," can only be accepted as an explanation, not an excuse. I am reminded by this work of that early stage of occupational therapy which consists of drawing threads from pieces of cloth, with a view to using the resultant heap of shreds for stuffing a soft toy. Mr. Broadfield has disintegrated his material very thoroughly: he has omitted to integrate it into a useful form.

Perhaps I am doing him an injustice. Perhaps this book is only the precursor to another in which he will present his own philosophy of classification in a more integrated manner. For the sake of my peace of mind, I hope so.

The Library Assistant

Training and Teaching

Demo

FIRST impressions are clearest, if only because later modifications tend to blur the original outlines. I should like to express an opinion which I know is common to a number of us who are returning to the profession with senses somewhat sharpened by the gulf of absence, and to make a plea for the future of all in the profession.

The New Examination. Combined with the shock of finding how much is now expected of the humble assistant—the majority of whom have no option but to study in their spare time—is coupled a delight in the active effort which is being made to raise the status of the profession. We realise that a higher standard of educational qualification is our strongest claim to equality with the accountant, the doctor, the chemist, the engineer, and many other professional people.

The Training. We have the choice now of three methods, (*a*) the old correspondence course method, (*b*) evening classes, and (*c*) a one-year full-time course at a Technical College.

(*a*) Everyone has the opportunity of taking a correspondence course—if the A.A.L. can find sufficient tutors. But may we beseech those librarians who achieved their F.L.A. after taking six certificates to recall those far-off days of toil and "spare-time study," and ask themselves what they would do if faced with the syllabus of today? Four subjects for the Entrance Examination, six subjects and possibly a viva voce for the Registration Examination, and six subjects plus a viva voce for the Final Examination. And for only one of the subjects of the Final we have just been told that we should do a minimum of 20-hours reading a week. Twenty hours, with one's full-time daily work and travelling to do and six other subjects to cover! On this thought let us pass hastily to method—

(*b*) Evening classes—or, perhaps, afternoon classes on one's half day. We are grateful that the stimulus of oral tuition and class competition has been recognised, and an attempt made to make provision for these. But there are one or two difficulties yet to be overcome.

The Library Association have of course envisaged the fact that there are hundreds of smaller and scattered Authorities whose staffs have no access to classes. There is another matter of equal importance, which is that there appear to be no trained teachers in the profession.

This is a matter of the greatest importance to all would-be librarians. Only a fractional number will ever manage to achieve their F.L.A. on the old, iniquitous method of private study. The rest must have tuition. And although a librarian may be very well qualified, that does not make him—or her—a good or even an adequate teacher. The whole matter of future instruction is going to rest on the policy developed now, and amateur fumblings at instruction will not be sufficient to raise a librarian's education to a desirable standard under the new regulations.

I am one of the lucky few who have access to evening classes—and these are overfull. I have started—enthusiastically but misguidedly!—to attend two classes taken by librarians and one, Literary Criticism, taken by a qualified teacher. The contrast is painful and disturbing.

The teacher lounges back comfortably and lectures for one and a half hours. He is interesting, informative, stimulating, at times salty, and subtly ironical : he leaves you with a good many new thoughts, some brief but pungent notes, and food for thought and reading for several weeks.

The librarians appear nervous, are armed with about sixteen sheets of foolscap on which they appear to have written a lecture, and both speak so low and indistinctly that we cannot hear all they say. One of the two is an " experienced " teacher of the subject, the other a newcomer. Now, if they read out their lectures with punch and verve it would be something, although not teaching. But they don't. Instead, they mumble a few phrases, say " er . . . ah . . . and hum . . . " most frequently, and turn a page surreptiously. The lectures were in the one case too disconnected and in the other too featureless for any note-taking. But, what is worse, the whole class in each case was infected with a feeling of deadly boredom. We were given chunks of home reading to do from books which, it was indicated, a number of the class cannot obtain at the moment, if at all. There was nothing in the class for us to follow up, and no word to round off or liven up the textbooks we must study.

My object in describing these classes is to make a suggestion for our future. We need trained lecturers in librarianship.

Perhaps we could get them trained through the London University School of Librarianship, otherwise there are training colleges for Technical Teachers being set up all over the country, which give a six months course on education, teaching practice and teaching experience, to men and women who already know their subjects. If the Library Association could arrange a similar scheme for librarians within the greater scheme—I can think of two or three methods of financing this—a trained panel of instructors could be created, and these would be available also for—

(*c*) A one-year full-time course. At present these courses are proving so popular that they are too few, and their teaching quality is a matter of conjecture, but they must be our hope for the future.

One final note. There do not seem to be nearly enough textbooks to go round. May we appeal to all librarians to build up a good stock, so that succeeding generations may have access to the old as well as to the new, and to press the publishers for reprints where necessary.

These are the points in our education which affect us most urgently and, whilst we shall welcome our enhanced reputation when we can achieve it, I think others will join me in asking that " something be done about it."

A.A.L. Correspondence Courses

A special appeal is made to those members who are suitably qualified and interested in this work, to make application to join our panel of Tutors. There are vacancies in a number of sections, and anyone interested is asked to contact their Divisional Hon. Secretary as soon as possible.

Correspondence Courses in the sections mentioned below will be arranged to run from April to June of the following year, and from November to December of the following year.

The Library Assistant

The courses, conducted under the auspices of the A.A.L. (Section of the L.A.), comprise ten monthly lessons, consisting of a prescribed selection of technical reading, hints and advice on study and practical work, and questions or subjects for essays upon which the tutor will write comments or corrections.

The subjects treated and the respective fees are as set out below :—

Entrance Examination.—The course covers the whole of the L.A. requirements for this examination. Fee, £2 0*s.* 0*d.*

Registration Examination.—Group (*a*) (i) Classification—Fee, £1 5*s.* 0*d.* ; (ii) Cataloguing—Fee, £1 5*s.* 0*d.* Group (*b*) (iii) *and* (iv) Bibliography *and* Assistance to Readers in the choice of books—Fee, £2 0*s.* 0*d.* Group (*c*) (v) Library Organization and Administration—Fee, £1 5*s.* 0*d.* ; (vi) History of English Literature—Fee, £1 5*s.* 0*d.*

Final Examination.—Part 1, Bibliography and Book Selection—Fee, £1 10*s.* 0*d.* Part 2, Library Organization and General Librarianship—Fee, £1 10*s.* 0*d.* Part 3, Library Routine and Administration : (*a*) Public Libraries—Fee, £1 10*s.* 0*d.* ; (*b*) University and College Libraries—Fee, £1 10*s.* 0*d.* Part 4, Literary Criticism and Appreciation : (*a*) Modern Literature—Fee, £1 10*s.* 0*d.* Part 5, Specialist Certificates : (*c*) Advanced Classification—Fee, £1 5*s.* 0*d.* ; Advanced Cataloguing—Fee, £1 5*s.* 0*d.* ; (*d*) Historical Bibliography—Fee, £1 10*s.* 0*d.*

It is anticipated that, from November, 1946, the A.A.L. will be able to offer a limited number of Courses covering the following section of the Final examinations : Part 3 (*e*) Special Libraries and Information Bureaux—Fee, £1 10*s.* 0*d.*

Both full courses and short revision courses in Classification and Cataloguing, based on the old syllabus, are still available for those members who wish to complete their Intermediate Examination, having already passed one part by December, 1945. Fees for these courses remain at £1 6*s.* 6*d.* per subject.

Non-members of the Library Association are charged double fees.

Students wishing to enter for a course must obtain an application form and send it, together with the necessary fee, to Mrs. S. W. Martin, Carnegie Library, Herne Hill Road, London, S.E.24. Applications must reach the above before 20th March and 20th October for the April and November courses, respectively, and before 20th February and 20th August for the revision courses. After these dates no application will be considered.

Important.—***Before entering for a course, students are particularly advised to make themselves familiar with the regulations governing the examination, as printed in the "Library Association Year Book." Any queries concerning the examinations or the syllabus should be sent direct to the Library Association and not to the Association of Assistant Librarians.***

Students should note that the revised and enlarged edition of Phillips " A Primer of Book Classification " is now published. It is to be obtained direct from the Hon. Education Secretary at the Carnegie Library, Herne Hill Road, London, S.E. 24. The new edition of this essential text-book is not large, and intending purchasers should

place their orders as soon as possible. The price is 6*s.* to members, and 7*s.* to non-members.

Books for Study while Serving with the Army

Anyone requiring books for study should, in the first instance, make application to the Unit Librarian or Education Officer.

A request for the books required will then be forwarded to the Command Librarian who will, as far as possible, supply from stock. Books are usually issued to units and not to individuals.

Application will be made to the War Office for any book not already in stock at Command or of which additional copies are required.

It has been found that War Office give very sympathetic consideration to all requests and will even endeavour to purchase second-hand should a book required be out of print.

Reviews

Librarians, no less than those engaged in the trades or arts of printing, publishing, writing and bookselling, will welcome the fourth edition of Sir Stanley Unwin's *The Truth about publishing* (Allen and Unwin, 8*s.*6*d.*) The last edition of this necessary and useful work appeared in 1929, and no doubt most libraries' copies have been worn out or become sadly tattered during the war years. The fourth edition has been re-set and contains new material: some parts which appeared in earlier editions have been omitted, and some viewpoints have been altered in accordance with conditions that have changed.

On pages 209 and 210 the author has some sharp and well-deserved remarks on the book-buying policy of what we hope are very few public libraries. And he adds a word of appreciation, which, coming from his pen, is sincere and encouraging. Perusal of such books as this is likely to remind the librarian that the commodity in which he deals is the printed word, and he will be less likely to enter light-heartedly on those extra-mural activities and administrative sports which fritter time away and debase the profession.

Students will find *The Truth about publishing* canonized in The Library Association's list of text and reference books. But the book is rather too well-written, and rather too human to be regarded wholly as a textbook. It is an essential work for all who consider themselves bookmen, and it has an over-riding claim to a place on the shelves of every library.

The *Assistant* has received the first issue of a new quarterly—*The Indian Librarian* (P.O. Forman College, Lahore, India. 15*s.* per annum). The journal proposes to keep "the all-India perspective" in view in determining its treatment of library problems; and "will endeavour to approach the trends and developments in the library world in India against the international background." This issue contains articles by Ranganathan (Library literature in future India); by Sahaya (Books for the young); by Ohdedar on micro-books, and by Nagar (Nationalisation of library technique). We look forward with interest to future issues of *The Indian Librarian.*

Correspondence

County Library,
S. Mary's Gate,
Derby.

The Editor, *The Library Assistant*.

Sir,—

I hope I may not be thought discourteous or accused of interfering in other people's affairs if I draw attention to a practice which appears to be growing and which seems to me prejudicial to the interests of the Association of Assistant Librarians. The *Record* this month contains the reports of three Library Association Branch meetings and all were joint meetings with the respective A.A.L. Division. It is, Sir, surely a bad thing that, except in special circumstances, the meetings of the two bodies should be combined.

One of the main functions of the A.A.L., the real reason for its separate existence as a Section, is to arrange meetings at which the middle and junior grades of the profession may air their views and gain experience in public speaking without the damping presence of Chief Librarians and authority representatives. No doubt there are some juniors so self-confident as not to be daunted by a solid body of chiefs, but most are not of this stamp. And, let us be realistic, there are chiefs who resent members of their staff expressing opinions with which they disagree, and some are not above visiting their resentment on the unfortunate assistants concerned.

The average junior feels diffidence and reluctance in getting to his feet before a number of much older and more senior librarians whose names are perhaps famous in the profession. This feeling may be wrong and uncalled for but it is natural. Therefore the A.A.L. should give him an opportunity of speaking at meetings of juniors and middle-grade staffs among whom he will feel more at home. The junior and middle assistant is not only the librarian most in contact with the public and the one who carries out most of the routine of a library, but also the librarian of the future, and it is important that his views should be formulated and expressed. In arranging meetings to this end the A.A.L. does its greatest service to the future of the profession.

There should be no great difficulty in running in an area two parallel programmes by the L.A. Branch and the A.A.L. Division in alternate months. This has been done in the Division of which I was until recently the chairman, both before and since the war, and the keenness and interest aroused can be judged by the fact that out of a total membership of less than 200 the usual attendance at meetings was about 35-40. If, with the resources of so small a Division, it is possible to run five or six meetings a year, it is surely possible to do so in Divisions of double and treble its size.

May I repeat that I hope that this criticism will not be considered impertinent by the Divisions concerned. There is a powerful and influential body of opinion in the L.A. which would welcome the disappearance of the A.A.L. I suggest that all who feel that the A.A.L. has a vital function to perform in the life of the profession should consider whether this policy of joint meetings does not imperil our position by making it possible for our opponents to ask with reason " What real good does the A.A.L. do ? "

Yours faithfully,

F. A. SHARR

Public Library,
Dunfermline,
Fife.

The Editor, *The Library Assistant*.

Sir,—

May I raise a few points on the constitution of Scottish County Library Committees? I am especially interested in the interpretation of the Local Government (Scotland) Act of 1929 by W. C. Berwick Sayers in his book *The Library Committee*.

On page 7 of this book, in the first full paragraph, the statement appears :

"The county education committee appoints a library committee of which not less than one-third and not more than one-half are to be members of the committee and the remainder of other residents."

I am inclined to think that there are two errors in this sentence, and suggest that it should read :

"The county education committee appoints a library sub-committee of which not less than one-half and not more than two-thirds are to be members of the county council and the remainder of other residents."

Besides correcting the slip in the proportion of ratepayers to councillors, it seems advisable to call the library body a "sub-committee" to avoid confusion with the education committee. Further, if we are to accept Sayers' statement that a certain number of the members of the library sub-committee are to be members of the (education) committee, we are faced with the possibility of a library governed by residents who need not be councillors.

The desirability of having one-third or a half of the library sub-committee consisting of residents is debatable, of course, but it is in accord with the spirit of Scottish education and library legislation. However, this parallelism with other laws is not in itself any reason for compulsory co-option to the library sub-committee, and it would be interesting to have specific reference to the Act, Section and Paragraph which gives the authority.

Section 14, paragraph 7 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act, 1929 states : "In any case where the Public Libraries Acts are in operation within any part of the landward area of a county, the administrative scheme of the county council relating to education may provide for the administration of the said Acts throughout the areas within which they are in operation being under the general supervision of the education committee, for the appointment as a library committee for each of the said areas of the district council of the district or of a committee consisting to the extent of not less than one-third and not more than one-half of persons who, not being members of the education committee, are resident within the area," etc. This, however, seems to suggest that the figures given are for local committees and only in the cases where libraries were operating under parish councils in 1929.

Perhaps Mr. Berwick Sayers would care to comment on the points I have raised. I am sure that clarification of the subject would be quite welcome to any student who, like myself, is anxious to verify the text-book material.

Yours faithfully,

William J. Murison.

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